Chapter 3

Visual Information Documentation

VIDOC provides a visual record of significant Army events and activities and encompasses both tactical and nontactical documentation. This chapter defines and discusses VIDOC to include COMCAM documentation, operational documentation (OPDOC), and technical documentation (TECDOC). It also discusses supplemental roles, the AVIDP, and training support.

INTRODUCTION

3-1. VIDOC is the use of motion media, still photography, and audio to acquire audio and visual records of events. It includes tactical and nontactical documentation and is divided into three categories of information: COMCAM documentation, OPDOC, and TECDOC. The purpose of the final product dictates the documentation category and provides justification for the initial imagery collection. Once the original collection mission is accomplished, the documentation can be used for other purposes.

3-2. VIDOC imagery preserves permanent visual records for historical purposes, such as after-action reports, lessons learned, briefings, books, magazine articles, movies, and television programming. This imagery also assists in building unit morale and identity by visually enhancing a unit's history.

COMCAM DOCUMENTATION

3-3. COMCAM is tactical documentation covering air, sea, and ground actions of armed forces in combat and combat support operations, catastrophes, natural disasters, and training activities (such as exercises, war games, operations, and peacetime engagements). It allows command, control, and management authorities, who may not be on the scene, to visualize the essence of ongoing activities. It is primarily used as an operational decision-making tool and does not include imagery specifically acquired by intelligence activities.

3-4. Tactical COMCAM documentation is an essential battlefield information resource that supports strategic, operational, and tactical mission objectives. It is shared, as required, to simultaneously support the operational and planning requirements of commanders and decision-makers from the combatant through National Command Authority (NCA) levels. It is a fundamental tool of commanders and decision-makers that, when utilized properly, is an effective combat multiplier.

PREOPERATIONAL PLANNING

3-5. Preoperational planning is the recording of selected or proposed routes into and within an operational area. It allows combat personnel to learn landmarks, building locations, and other visual references to get an accurate visual site image. Motion media can capture these references, as well as noise level, light level, and area traffic in urban areas. This imagery can also analyze an area before an operation or critique employment tactics if access to the site is available after exercises. Figure 3-1 shows an example of preoperational planning.

US Army photo, abandoned Serbian position

Figure 3-1. Preoperational Planning

BATTLEFIELD DAMAGE ASSESSMENT (BDA)

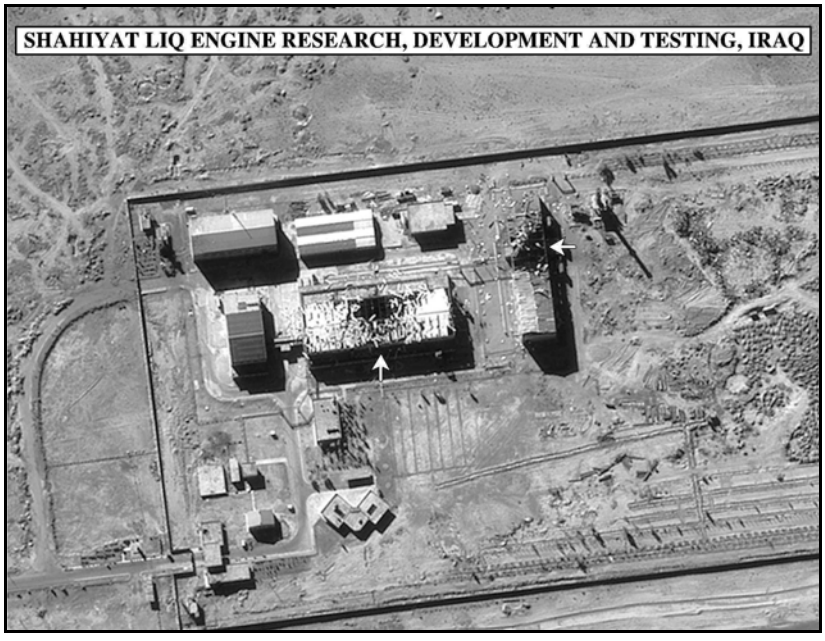
3-6. BDA imagery is a detailed record of battlefield damage to friendly equipment that gives tacticians immediate information to develop countermeasures to an enemy's weapons and allows logisticians to begin requisitioning appropriate supplies. Still photos or videos provide the necessary information to assess the current situation. Figure 3-2 shows an example of BDA imagery.

GAUGING EFFECTIVENESS

3-7. Gauging effectiveness imagery documents the effectiveness of friendly weapons. Documentation includes the amount of collateral damage, the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, and the nature and effectiveness of his countermeasures. This visual imagery can quickly and accurately communicate information for analysis beyond the capability of words. Figure 3-3 is an example of gauging effectiveness imagery.

US Navy photo, USS Cole

Figure 3-2. BDA



DOD photo, Iraq

Figure 3-3. Gauging Effectiveness

IMPROVING SA

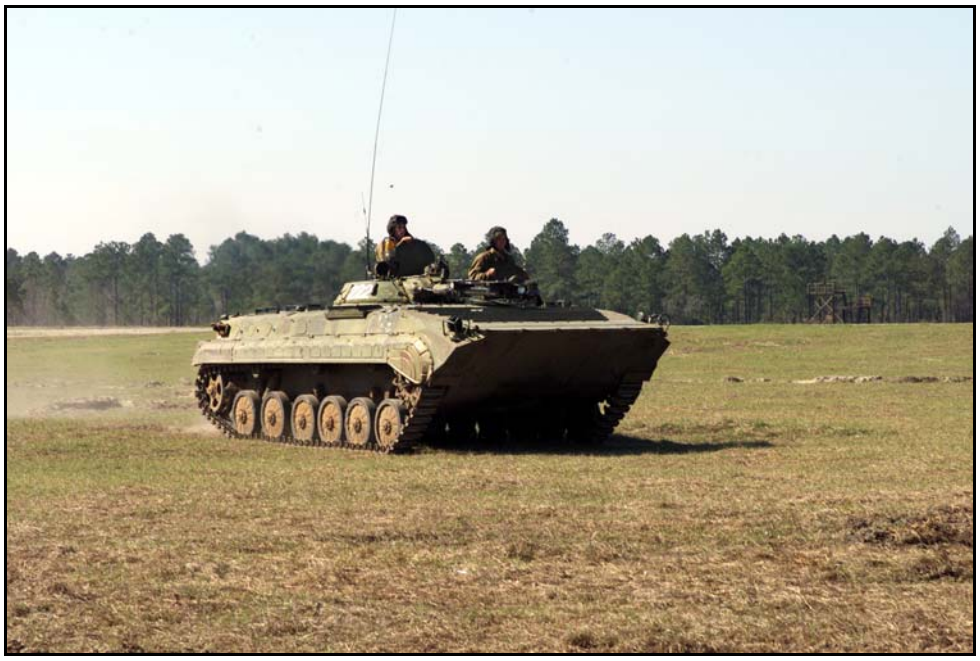
3-8. Improving SA imagery documents near real-time visual reports. Examples are actual combat conditions and progress in military operations and engagements for the component, theater, NCA, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and military services staffs for decision-making purposes. Figure 3-4 shows an example of improving SA imagery.

US Army photo by TASC photographer

Figure 3-4. Improving SA

REVIEW

3-9. Review imagery documents initial battle engagements of new weapons and support systems, both friendly and enemy. It can be used to revise friendly tactics or validate doctrine. High technology, precision weapons, and enemy WMD (chemicals and biological warfare agents) that may be used in future conflicts can significantly affect the battlefield situation. Commanders can use review imagery to visually comprehend the threat, thereby speeding innovation and the timely development of counter-tactics and revised doctrine. Figure 3-5 shows an example of review imagery.



US Army photo by TASC photographer

Figure 3-5. Review

OPERATIONAL DOCUMENTATION

3-10. OPDOC imagery documents tactical and nontactical activities. Its purpose is to archive and submit images of people, places, and things. OPDOC is generally performed in peacetime, and it is the most familiar type of nontechnical VI support.

3-11. OPDOC imagery supports PA and command information programs, construction and renovation projects, safety office and fire safety reports, personnel and community affairs projects, and numerous other programs. Much OPDOC material has only transitory, temporary value, but much also has lasting historical importance and must be preserved.

3-12. VI activities at troop installations usually perform OPDOC as a major part of their mission. The following paragraphs discuss OPDOC imagery.

READINESS POSTURE

3-13. Readiness posture imagery displays a unit's readiness. Still photos or videos provide the necessary information to assess the situation in ways a written report might not do justice. Figure 3-6 shows an example of readiness posture imagery.

SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONS

3-14. Significant operations imagery documents situations and supports public or community affairs programs. Examples are images of operations, campaigns, exercises, or maneuvers captured for historical or PA purposes. Figure 3-7 shows an example of significant operations imagery.

US Army photo by TASC photographer

Figure 3-6. Readiness Posture

US Army photo by TASC photographer

Figure 3-7. Significant Operations

SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

3-15. Significant programs and projects imagery documents programs and projects that impact national or Army policy. These images can be used to track progress, provide status, or document the accomplishment of significant milestones. Figure 3-8 shows the change in Army headgear and documents a significant milestone in Army transformation.

US Army photo, Black Berets

Figure 3-8. Significant Programs and Projects

CIVIL INVOLVEMENT

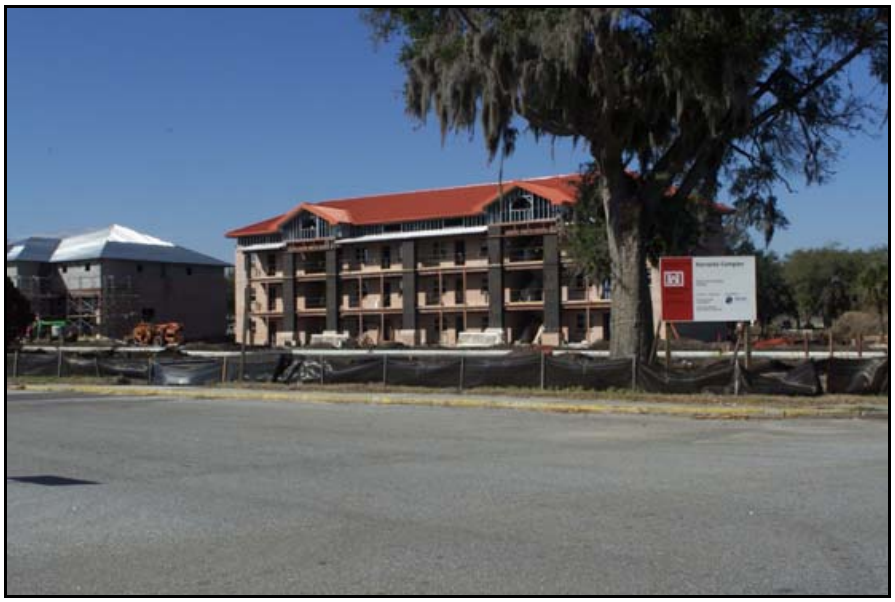
3-16. Civil involvement imagery shows operating conditions, chronicling Army efforts and participation in disaster relief, civil disturbances, and environmental protection. This imagery can be used as part of the PA or community relations program to keep the public abreast of developments. Figure 3-9 shows an example of civil involvement imagery.

CONSTRUCTION

3-17. This imagery shows construction of systems, facilities, and installations. It demonstrates project progress and provides information for future operations, after-action reviews (AARs), and lessons learned. Figure 3-10 shows an example of construction imagery.

US Army photo, Mogadishu

Figure 3-9. Civil Involvement



US Army photo by TASC photographer

Figure 3-10. Construction

SIGNIFICANT MILITARY EVENTS

3-18. Significant military events imagery provides a visual historical record. Examples of these are base closures/realignments; activation/deactivation, deployment, or change of command of a division or larger unit; and general officer promotions. Figure 3-11 shows an example of a significant military event.

US Army photo, change of command

Figure 3-11. Significant Military Event

MILITARY LIFE

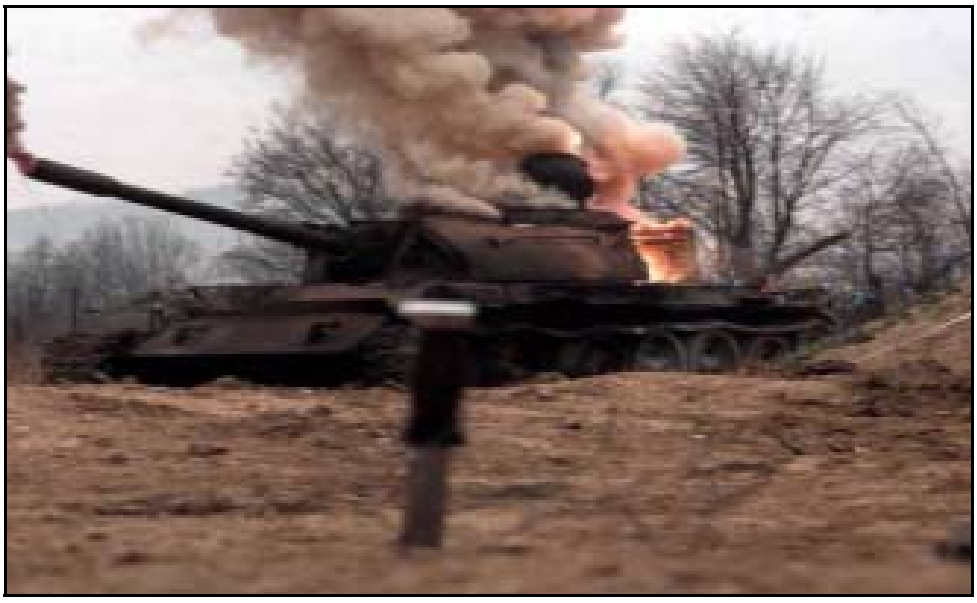
3-19. Military life imagery documents today's Army life. Examples are soldiers at work, physical training, new equipment usage, and enjoyment of life as a military family. Figure 3-12 shows an example of military life imagery.

TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION

3-20. TECDOC is nontactical documentation of an actual event taken in order to evaluate it. It contributes to the study of human or mechanical factors; procedures, and processes in the fields of medicine, science, logistics, RDTE, intelligence, investigations, and armament delivery. It is important permanent record material. Figure 3-13 shows a T-62 tank after a mine was detonated for demonstration purposes.

US Army photo, AT-4

Figure 3-12. Military Life



US Army photo, T-62

Figure 3-13. Evaluation

3-21. VI activities at proving grounds, missile ranges, hospitals, research centers, and similar installations are primarily engaged in TECDOC, but may also perform some OPDOC. Timely identification and preservation of record material is important for all VI activities, especially those concerned with TECDOC.

SUPPLEMENTAL ROLES

3-22. In addition to preserving permanent visual records for historical purposes, VIDOC imagery provides other supplemental, supporting roles.

LEGAL

3-23. Legal imagery provides hard visual evidence that can be used in the prosecution or defense of Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) issues or to complete investigators' accident or incident investigations. It also provides photographic proof of damage supporting US governmental property damage claims against foreign governments. Figure 3-14 shows an example of legal documentation imagery.

US Army photo, Khobar Towers

Figure 3-14. Legal Documentation

PSYOP

3-24. Imagery supports PSYOP programs by providing visual images to effectively support a successful PSYOP. By visually demonstrating US forces' capabilities, strength, or resolve, they help PSYOP forces to counter disinformation programs and influence military operations. Figure 3-15 shows an example of PSYOP imagery.

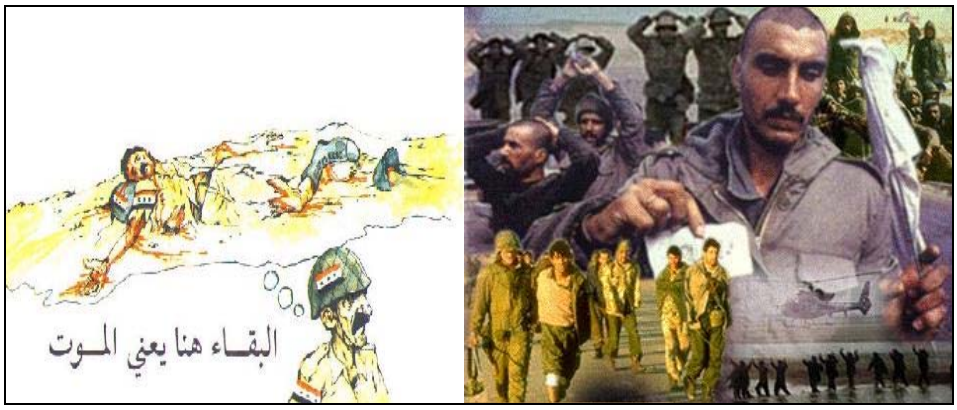


Photo courtesy of US Special Operations

Figure 3-15. PSYOP

SIMULATIONS

3-25. Simulations are images of recreated events developed using technology. Imagery of actual combat operations can assist in imparting the highest degree of realism to simulation technologies by including actual battle scenes and assisting in the detailed recreation of events.

3-26. High-speed computers and advanced software packages allow commanders to recreate entire battle engagements, second-by-second and shot-by-shot, that can be shown on large projection screens. Importing this imagery into computer programs enhances simulation technology. This includes making simulations interactive and possibly raising the technology from a training tool to an intelligence and C2 system. Figure 3-16 shows an example of simulation imagery.

US Army photo by TASC photographer

Figure 3-16. Simulation

ARMY VISUAL INFORMATION DOCUMENTATION PROGRAM

3-27. AVIDP provisions govern the disposition of any VIDOC product gathered by designated VI assets. The AVIDP directs that VIDOC material with lasting value or historical significance be collected and archived for historical purposes. It specifically regulates VIDOC products produced by VI forces, although VI collected through other means can also be submitted, if appropriate. This program ensures the nation has a visual record of significant Army events and activities.

3-28. Because of technological advances and the decreasing cost of purchasing audiovisual (AV) equipment, more units are purchasing COTS VI devices to help them accomplish their missions. While the provisions of DA PAM 25-91 and AVIDP do not cover products at all levels, leaders must ensure VI products are handled responsibly and are included in the visual record of military history when appropriate.

TRAINING SUPPORT

3-29. VIDOC imagery can provide the full range of VI products to meet a commander's training needs. The following paragraphs discuss types of training programs that can be developed using documentary capabilities.

VISUAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

3-30. Visual training programs can be distributed throughout a theater of operations. Training aides can cover such topics as changes in tactics or operational and maintenance procedures and can be rapidly and accurately distributed. During peacetime, training at every level is enhanced through such products as interactive videodisk, videotapes, and slide-tape programs.

INTERNAL PA PROGRAMS

3-31. Internal PA programs convey crucial information to large groups of soldiers quickly and efficiently. Examples of this type of information are soldiers' expectations and mission support.